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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, Prior to October of 2010, the overwhelming majority of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits were distributed on the 1st of the month in Illinois; and

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WHEREAS, Due to the SNAP distribution schedule, customers were relegated to shopping in crowded stores with elevated security, stores were unable to offer a high level of customer service due to the size of the crowds, customers who shopped later in the month found empty store shelves and diminished access to fresh fruits and vegetables, and employees saw their hours cut; and

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WHEREAS, The narrow SNAP distribution schedule caused enormous operational issues for Illinois grocers and retailers, especially for those businesses that operated in areas with a high density of customers that purchased food with SNAP funds; and

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WHEREAS, The SNAP distribution schedule also created significant operational issues for food banks, which experienced a dramatic increase in families in need at the end of the month when SNAP benefits ran out; and

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1 WHEREAS, In October of 2010, after many meetings with
2 representatives of the grocery industry and non-profit groups
3 that have an interest in food access for low-income residents,
4 the Illinois Department of Human Services instituted a change
5 in how SNAP benefits were distributed to Illinois residents;
6 and

7 WHEREAS, In order to relieve the pressure off of businesses
8 and customers at the first of the month, a large number of SNAP
9 customers were shifted from the first of the month to the 4th,
10 7th, and 10th of the month over the period of one year with
11 great success; and

12 WHEREAS, The Department of Human Services currently issues
13 SNAP benefits on the 1st, 3rd, 4th, 7th, 8th, 10th, 11th, 14th,
14 17th, 19th, 21st, and 23rd days of the month; and

15 WHEREAS, The Department of Human Services has decided to
16 shrink the SNAP distribution dates to the first 10 days of the
17 month; and

18 WHEREAS, The United States Department of Agriculture
19 (USDA), which controls the funding for the SNAP program, sent a
20 letter to each state encouraging states to spread SNAP
21 distribution evenly throughout the month; and

1 WHEREAS, This change goes in the opposite direction of the
2 advocacy position taken by the USDA and the movement of other
3 states in recent years, changing their systems to distribute
4 SNAP benefits evenly throughout the month; therefore, be it

5 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
6 NINETY-EIGHTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE
7 SENATE CONCURRING HEREIN, that the Task Force on the Efficient
8 Distribution of SNAP Benefits is created; and be it further

9 RESOLVED, That the Task Force shall consist of the
10 following 10 members, appointed as follows:

11 (1) four legislators, appointed one each by the
12 President of the Senate, the Minority Leader of the Senate, the
13 Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the Minority
14 Leader of the House of Representatives;

15 (2) the Secretary of the Illinois Department of Human
16 Services or his or her designee;

17 (3) one person appointed by the Governor to represent a
18 state-wide association exclusively representing retailers;

19 (4) one person appointed by the Governor to represent a
20 state-wide association exclusively representing grocers;

21 (5) one person appointed by the Governor to represent a
22 non-profit organization focusing on advancing justice and
23 opportunity for low-income Illinois residents; and

24 (6) one person appointed by the Governor to represent a

1 non-profit organization focusing on the full development of
2 children in Illinois; and be it further

3 RESOLVED, That the co-chairs of the Task Force shall invite
4 representatives of the USDA to participate in the Task Force;
5 and be it further

6 RESOLVED, That the designee of the Speaker of the House of
7 Representatives and the designee of the Senate President shall
8 serve as co-chairs of the Task Force; and be it further

9 RESOLVED, That the members of the Task Force shall be
10 appointed no later than 30 days after the effective date of
11 this resolution; the members of the Task Force shall not
12 receive compensation; and be it further

13 RESOLVED, That the Department of Human Services shall
14 provide administrative support to the Task Force; and be it
15 further

16 RESOLVED, That the Task Force shall prepare a report that
17 details how SNAP benefits can be distributed more evenly
18 throughout the month in the State of Illinois and shall submit
19 this report to the Governor and the General Assembly by October
20 1, 2013; and be it further

1 RESOLVED, That the Task Force, upon issuing the report, is
2 dissolved effective October 1, 2013.